



No.191

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# THE KING IN A PARROT'S BODY



A JAIN TALE

C.M. Vitankar



Jain monks took a keen interest in the spiritual uplift of the common people. To make their difficult philosophy accessible to the layman, they used the medium of stories.

Most of the stories teach that meritorious acts bring prosperity and evil acts untold misery. According to Jain philosophy, man is the master of his own destiny. He reaps what he sows. No outside force can help him get what he does not deserve, nor can it prevent him from getting what he does deserve.

The story of King Shuklapaksha has an underlying allegory. Shuklapaksha literally means the bright half of a lunar month and Krishnapaksha, the dark half. The king symbolises good and the minister evil. The confrontation between the two, and the ultimate triumph of good over evil, is the subject of this story.

*Rajiv T. Mukerji*

AMAR CHITRAKATHA means good reading.  
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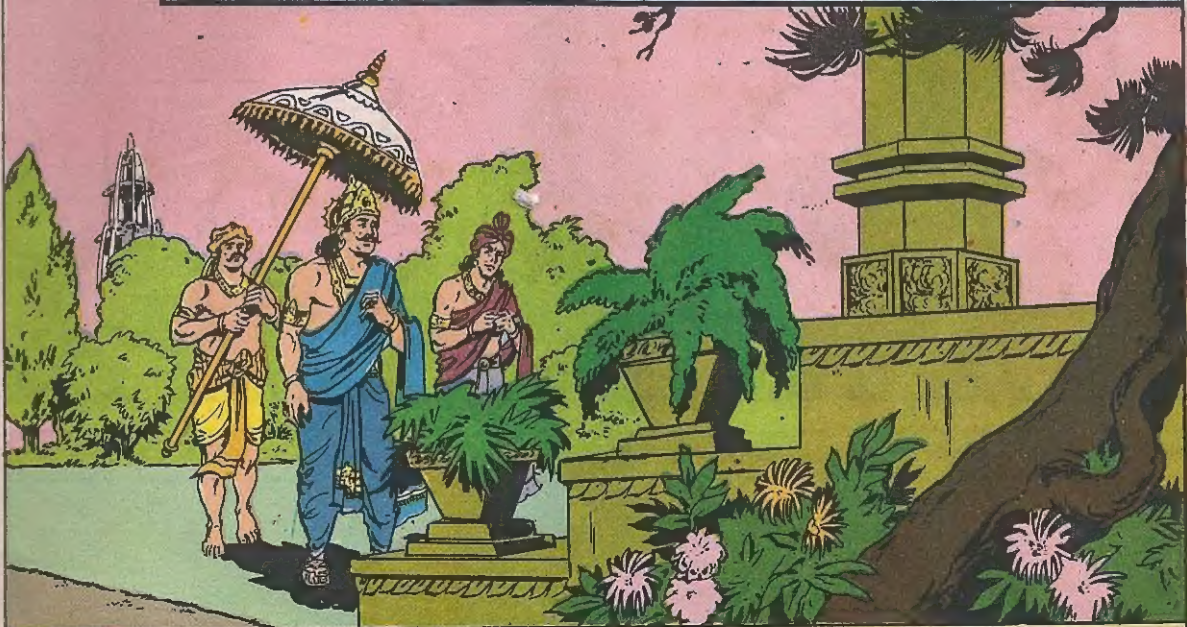
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# THE KING IN A PARROT'S BODY



LONG, LONG, AGO THERE WAS A NOBLE KING CALLED SHUKLAPAKSHA WHO REIGNED OVER A CITY CALLED PRITHVIBHUSHANA. HE WAS SO PURE OF HEART THAT HE COULD NEVER SEE BAD IN ANOTHER. HE HAD A MINISTER, KRISHNAPAKSHA, WHO, SAD TO SAY, WAS A WICKED MAN.

ONE MORNING —

YOUR MAJESTY,  
THERE IS A  
MERCHANT  
OUTSIDE  
FROM A FAR-  
OFF COUNTRY.  
HE HAS A  
GIFT FOR  
YOU.

SHOW  
HIM IN.



WHAT A  
FINE HORSE!







AS THE KING EXAMINED THE HORSE, AN EVIL PLAN TOOK SHAPE IN THE MINISTER'S MIND.





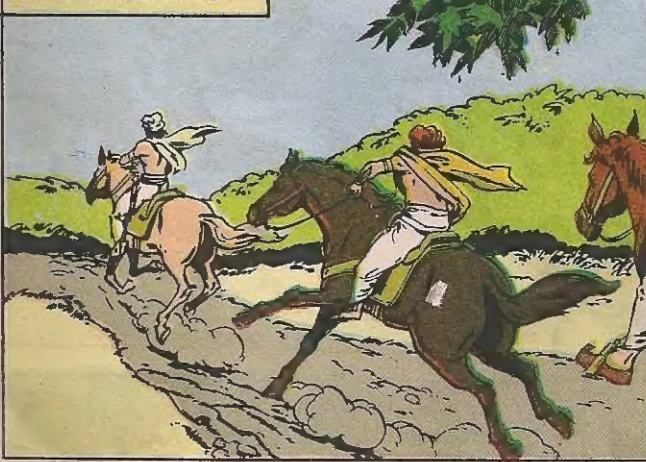
...AND OUT OF THE PALACE.



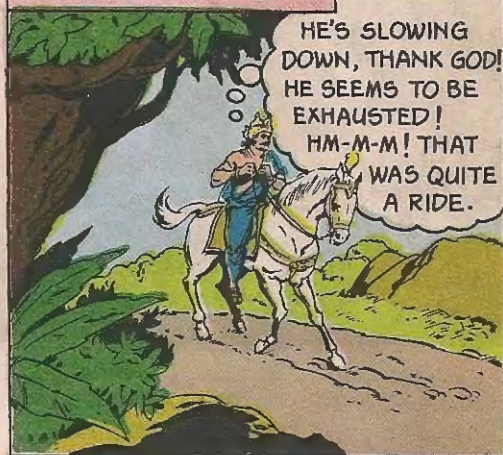
OH, NO! THE STEED NEEDS TO GET USED TO HIM. THE KING WILL KILL HIMSELF!

THEN I WILL BE KING! I'LL WAIT FOR A FEW DAYS TO MAKE SURE HE'S DEAD!

MEANWHILE, A FEW COURTIERS IMMEDIATELY MOUNTED THEIR STEEDS AND WENT OUT AFTER THE KING.



BUT THE KING AND HIS HORSE WERE FAR, FAR AWAY, IN A DENSE FOREST. TOWARDS EVENING —



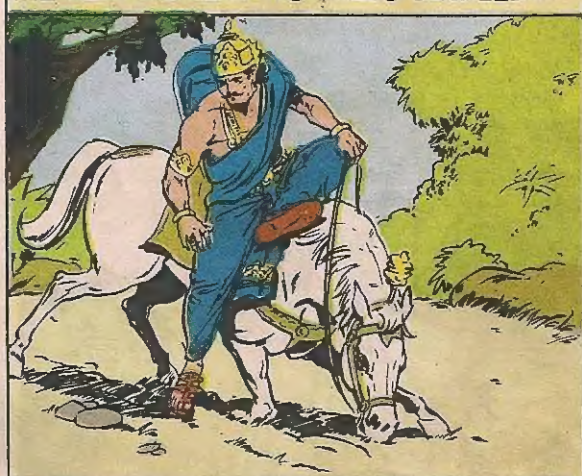
HE'S SLOWING DOWN, THANK GOD! HE SEEMS TO BE EXHAUSTED! HM-M-M! THAT WAS QUITE A RIDE.

SUDDENLY THE HORSE STOOD STILL.



WHAT'S THE MATTER, MY BEAUTY? WE'VE LOST OUR WAY. YOU MUST NOT STOP NOW!

THE NEXT MOMENT ITS KNEES BUCKLED...

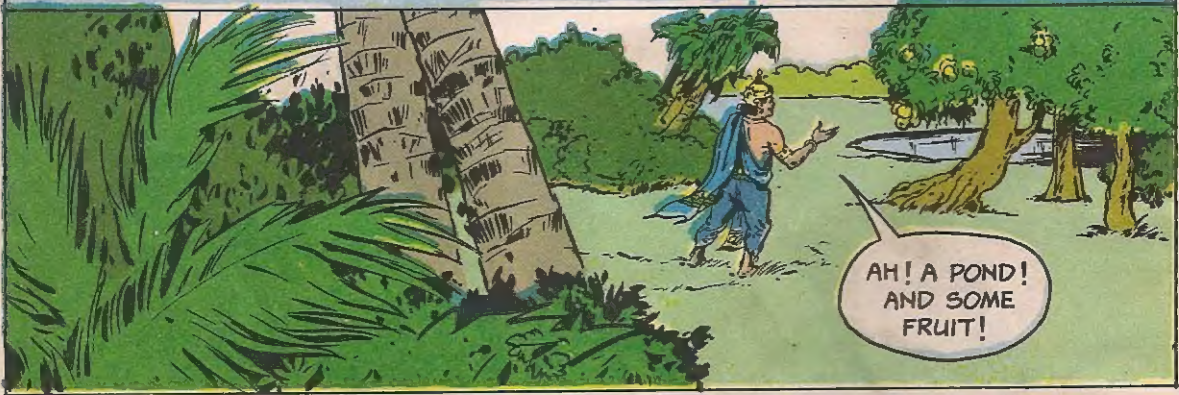




...AND IT FELL DEAD.



LEAVING THE HORSE, THE TIRED, THIRSTY AND HUNGRY KING WALKED WEARILY ON.



HE REFRESHED HIMSELF AT THE POND AND BEGAN TO PLUCK SOME FRUIT. SUDDENLY —

WHO ARE YOU?  
WHAT BRINGS YOU  
TO THIS FOREST  
ALONE, YOUNG  
MAN?



O HOLY ONE, I AM  
SO HAPPY TO  
SEE YOU. I....





THE KING THEN TOLD HIM WHO HE WAS AND HOW HE HAPPENED TO BE THERE.

WHY DON'T YOU  
COME AND SPEND  
THE NIGHT AT  
MY HUT?

I AM GRATEFUL  
TO YOU,  
HOLY ONE.

WHEN THEY REACHED THE HUT—

THE HERMIT HAS A  
QUEST! HOW REGAL IS  
HIS BEARING! HE MUST  
BE A KING!

THE VERY  
GODDESS OF GOOD  
FORTUNE! WHY  
DOES SHE LEAD  
THE LIFE OF  
A RECLUSE?

I MUST MAKE  
HER MY  
QUEEN!

THE KING  
SEEMS SMITTEN  
BY THE MAID!



O SAGE, WHO  
IS THAT  
MAIDEN ?

SHE IS  
NIVRITTI, THE  
DAUGHTER OF  
THE KING OF  
THE VIDYA-  
DHARAS\*.

WHY IS SHE  
HERE ?

IT'S A LONG  
STORY BUT I'LL  
TELL IT AS  
BRIEFLY AS  
I CAN.

"ONE DAY, A VIDYADHARA FLEW INTO HER FATHER'S PALACE..."

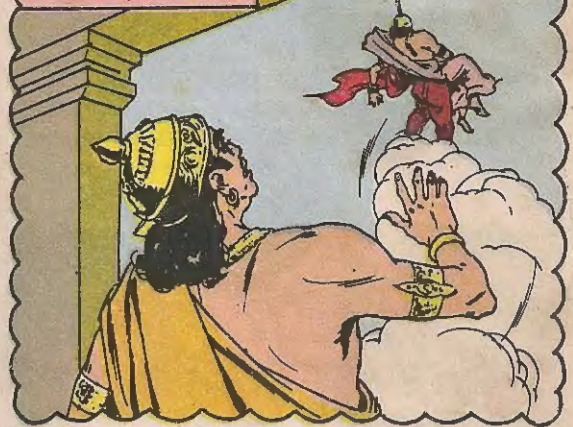


...AND CARRIED NIVRITTI AWAY."

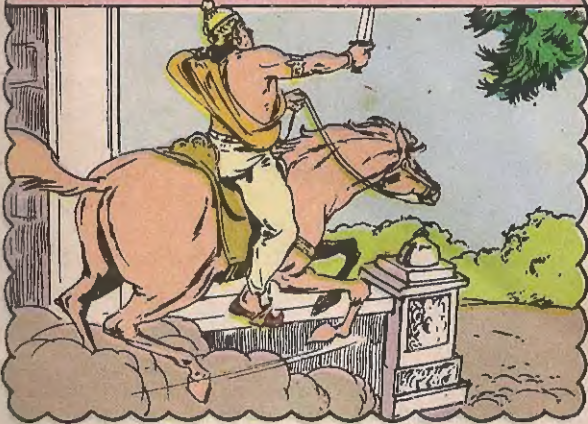
HELP!  
HELP!



"HEARING HER SCREAMS, HER FATHER  
RUSHED OUT..."



...AND GALLOPED AFTER THEM."



"THE VIDYADHARA TURNED ROUND  
AND SAW THE KING."

OH! OH! IT'S HER  
FATHER! I'D BETTER  
GET RID OF THE  
GIRL.



"HE DROPPED HER IN FRONT OF MY HERMITAGE AND FLED FOR HIS LIFE."

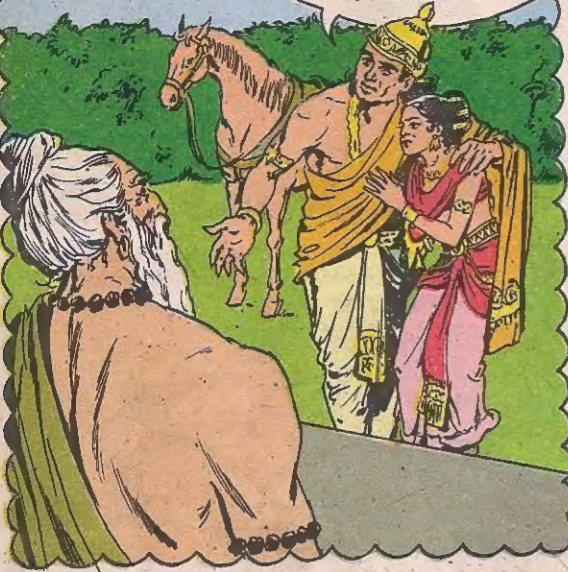




"A FEW MINUTES LATER HER FATHER CAME UP."

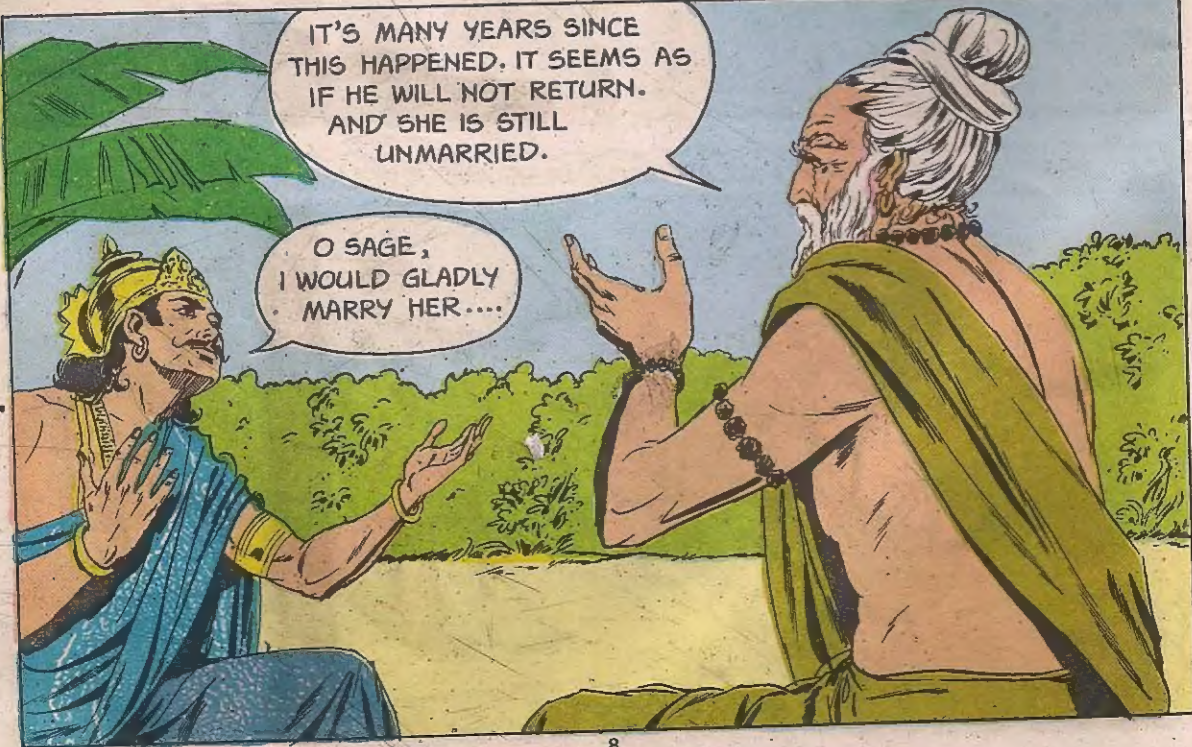
I'M GOING AFTER THE RASCAL AND WILL NOT BE BACK TILL HE IS CAUGHT AND PUNISHED. PLEASE LOOK AFTER MY DAUGHTER TILL I RETURN.

BUT IF I AM DELAYED, PLEASE MARRY HER TO A WORTHY MAN. HE MUST POSSESS THE POWER OF ENTERING A DEAD BODY.



IT'S MANY YEARS SINCE THIS HAPPENED. IT SEEMS AS IF HE WILL NOT RETURN. AND SHE IS STILL UNMARRIED.

O SAGE, I WOULD GLADLY MARRY HER....





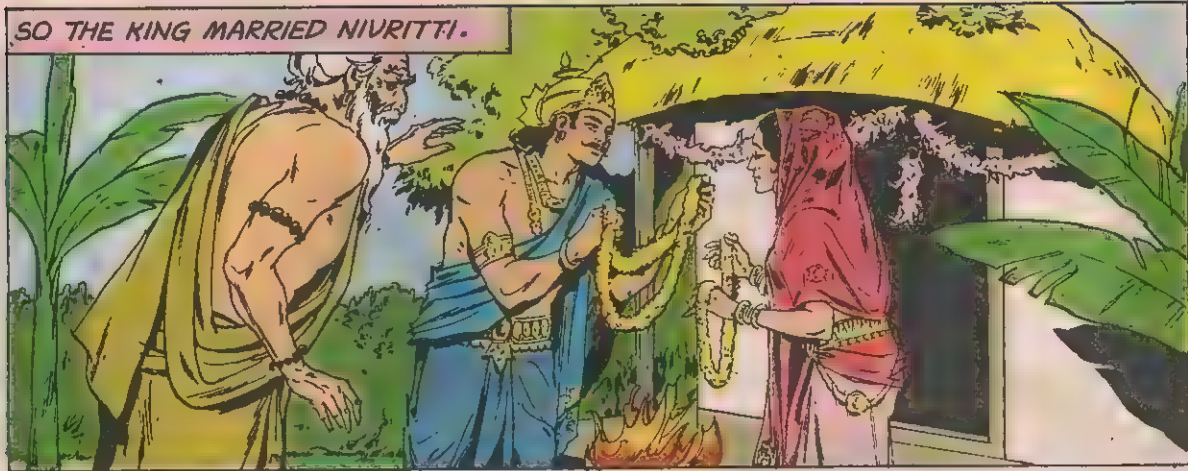
WELL, YOU ARE CERTAINLY A DESERVING PERSON. IF ONLY YOU HAD THE POWER TO ENTER A DEAD BODY!

I MUST MAKE HER MY QUEEN. ISN'T THERE SOME WAY OUT?

ALL RIGHT. YOU MAY MARRY HER. BUT TILL YOU ARE IN POSSESSION OF THE POWER DO NOT TAKE HER INTO THE INNER APARTMENTS OF YOUR PALACE.

I'LL DO AS YOU SAY, HOLY ONE. ONLY LET HER COME WITH ME.

SO THE KING MARRIED NIVRITTI.



JUST THEN THE COURTIER'S WHO HAD FOLLOWED THE KING FOUND THEIR WAY TO THE HUT. IT HAD TAKEN THEM A LONG TIME TO REACH THE PLACE.

WE HAVE FOUND THE KING!

THANK GOD HE IS SAFE!





AH! MY MEN! YOU'VE  
COME JUST IN TIME  
TO ESCORT  
US HOME.

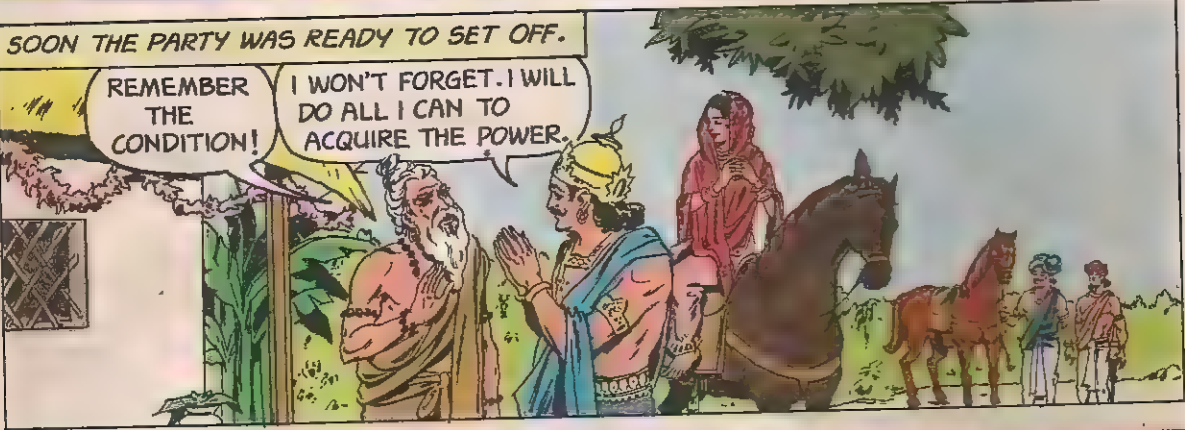
WE ARE HONOURED, YOUR  
MAJESTY. TWO OF US WILL RIDE  
ON AHEAD AND INFORM THE  
MINISTER THAT YOU ARE  
WELL.



SOON THE PARTY WAS READY TO SET OFF.

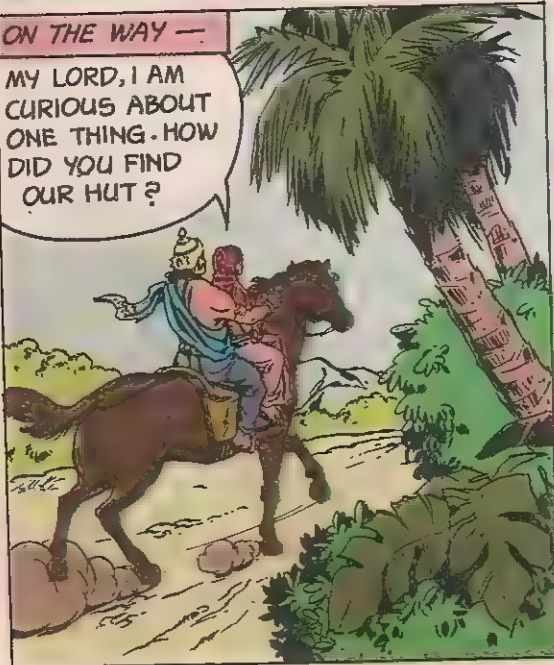
REMEMBER  
THE  
CONDITION!

I WON'T FORGET. I WILL  
DO ALL I CAN TO  
ACQUIRE THE POWER.



ON THE WAY —

MY LORD, I AM  
CURIOUS ABOUT  
ONE THING. HOW  
DID YOU FIND  
OUR HUT?



WHEN THE KING TOLD HER THE STORY —

THE MINISTER SEEMS TO BE AN  
EVIL MAN. IF HE CARED FOR THE  
KING'S SAFETY HE WOULD NOT  
HAVE ASKED HIM TO MOUNT A  
STEED THAT HAD NOT  
FIRST BEEN  
TAMED.



BUT SHE DID NOT VOICE HER THOUGHTS.

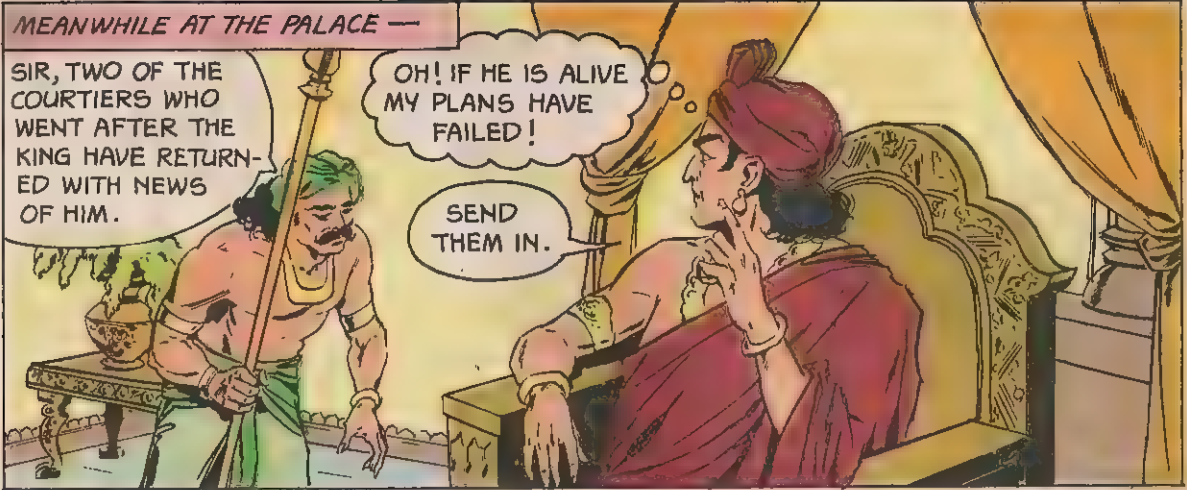


MEANWHILE AT THE PALACE —

SIR, TWO OF THE COURTIER'S WHO WENT AFTER THE KING HAVE RETURNED WITH NEWS OF HIM.

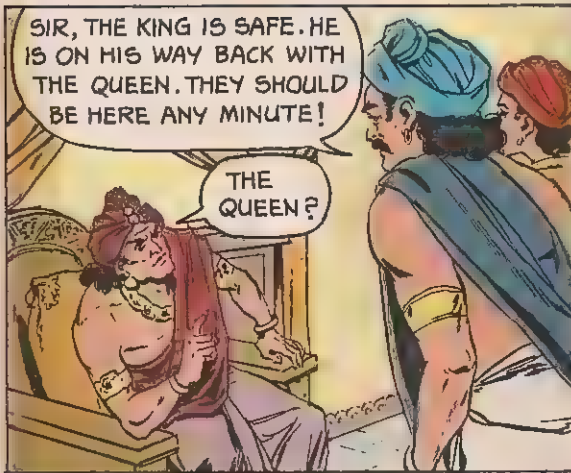
OH! IF HE IS ALIVE MY PLANS HAVE FAILED!

SEND THEM IN.



SIR, THE KING IS SAFE. HE IS ON HIS WAY BACK WITH THE QUEEN. THEY SHOULD BE HERE ANY MINUTE!

THE QUEEN?

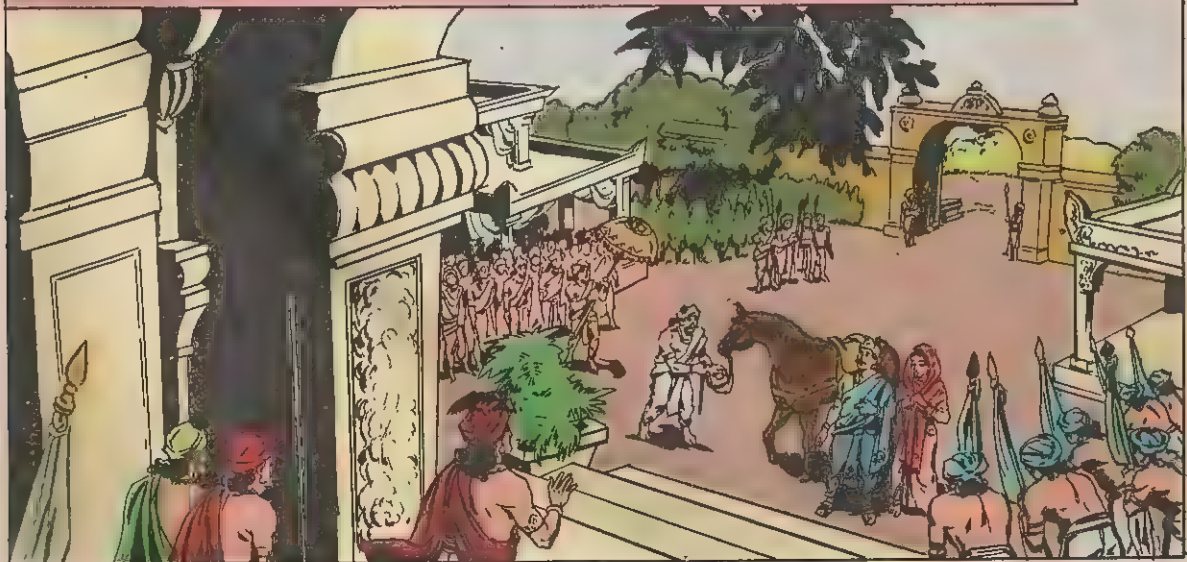


YES, SIR. SHE IS A VIDYADHARA PRINCESS! HIS MAJESTY MARRIED HER IN THE FOREST.

I CAN HEAR HOOF-BEATS. THEY'RE HERE!



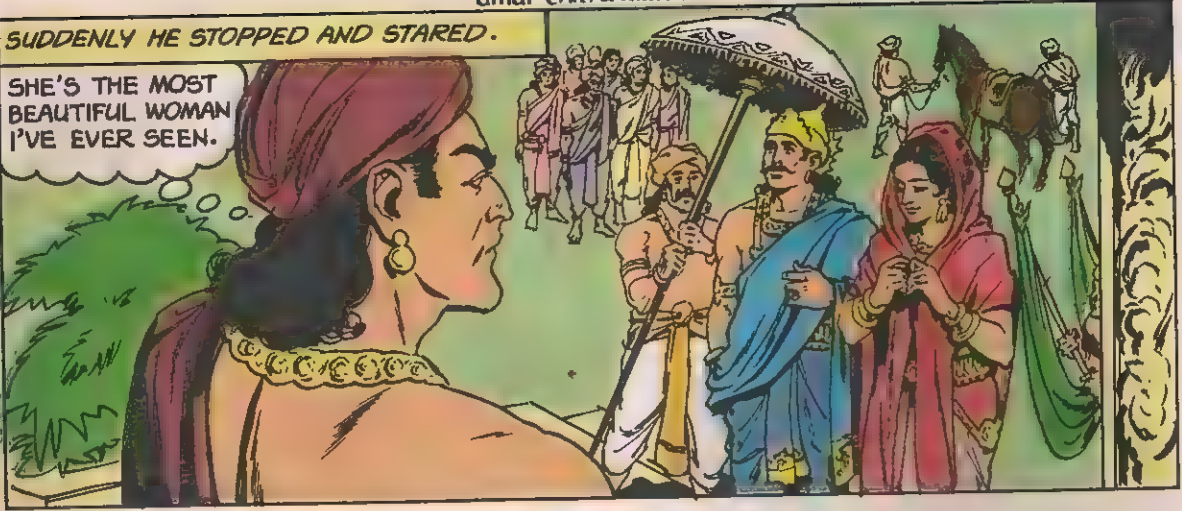
PRETENDING TO BE HAPPY, THE MINISTER RUSHED OUT TO GREET THE KING.





SUDDENLY HE STOPPED AND STARED.

SHE'S THE MOST BEAUTIFUL WOMAN I'VE EVER SEEN.



AND HE WALKED SLOWLY UP TO THEM.

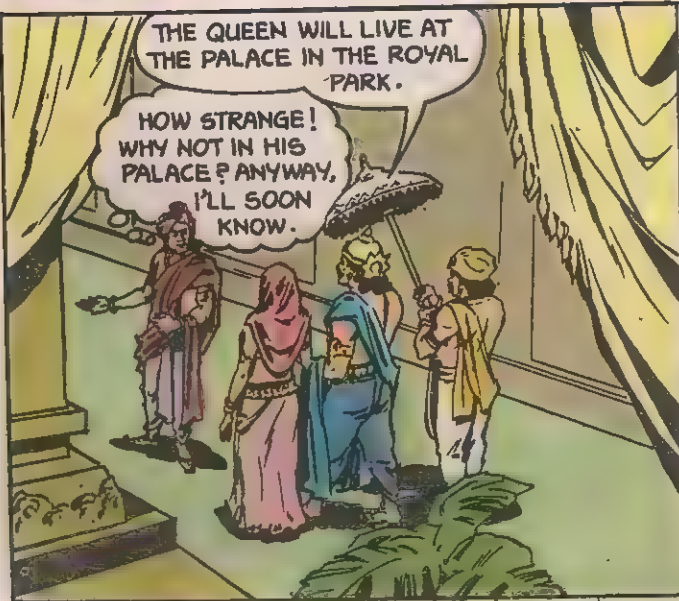
THIS IS MY MINISTER, KRISHNA-PAKSHIKA.

OH! SO THIS IS HIM! I'M NOW SURE THAT HE IS AN EVIL MAN. I MUST WARN MY HUSBAND ABOUT HIM, SOON.



THE QUEEN WILL LIVE AT THE PALACE IN THE ROYAL PARK.

HOW STRANGE! WHY NOT IN HIS PALACE? ANYWAY, I'LL SOON KNOW.



LATER, INSIDE HIS PALACE THE KING SAT BROODING OVER HIS PROBLEM.

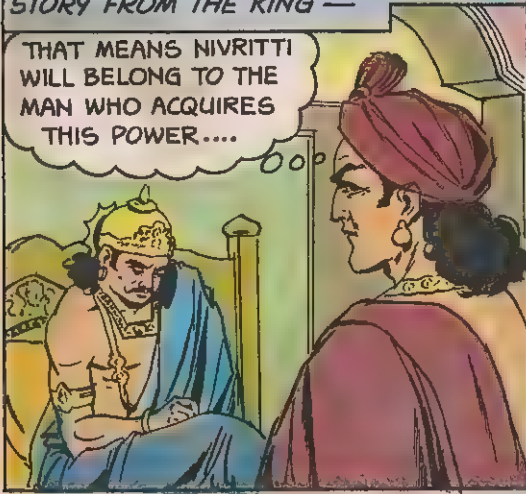
WHAT SHALL I DO? HOW AM I TO ACQUIRE THE POWER? I'LL HAVE TO CONFIDE IN KRISHNAPAKSHIKA.





WHEN THE MINISTER HEARD THE WHOLE STORY FROM THE KING —

THAT MEANS NIVRITTI WILL BELONG TO THE MAN WHO ACQUIRES THIS POWER....



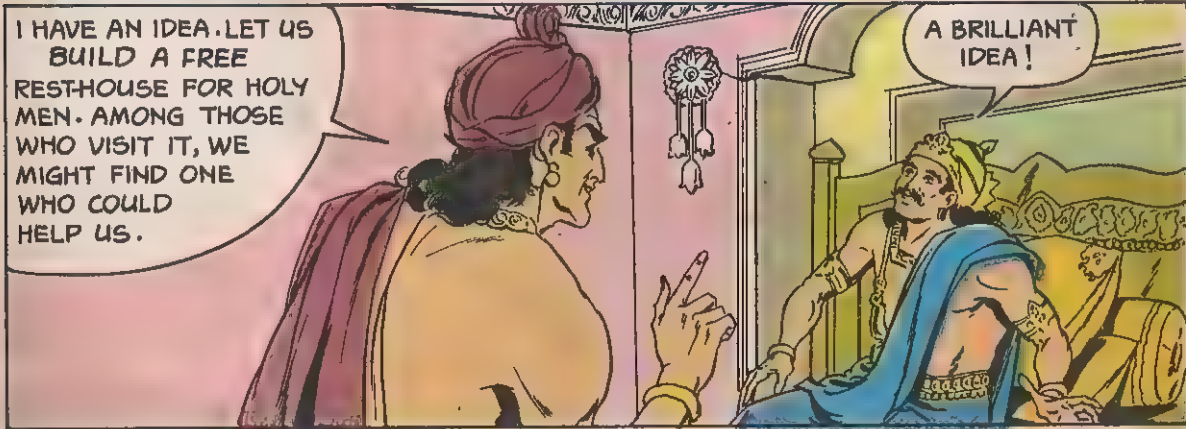
WHAT SHALL I DO?  
TO WHOM SHOULD  
I TURN?

BUT IN WHATEVER  
WAY YOU GET IT,  
I, TOO, SHALL GET  
IT, AND MAKE  
NIVRITTI MY WIFE!



I HAVE AN IDEA. LET US  
BUILD A FREE  
RESTHOUSE FOR HOLY  
MEN. AMONG THOSE  
WHO VISIT IT, WE  
MIGHT FIND ONE  
WHO COULD  
HELP US.

A BRILLIANT  
IDEA!



SO THE RESTHOUSE WAS SOON CONSTRUCTED AND HUNDREDS OF HOLY MEN VISITED IT EVERY DAY. SIX MONTHS WENT BY.

ANY  
LUCK  
TODAY?

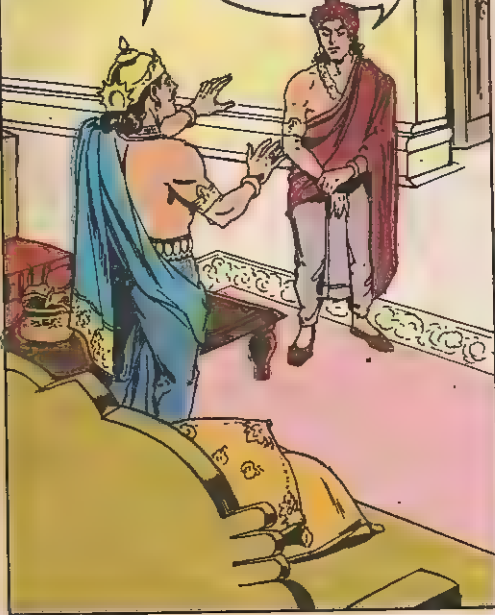
NONE AT ALL. I DON'T  
THINK IT WAS SUCH  
A GOOD IDEA  
AFTER ALL.





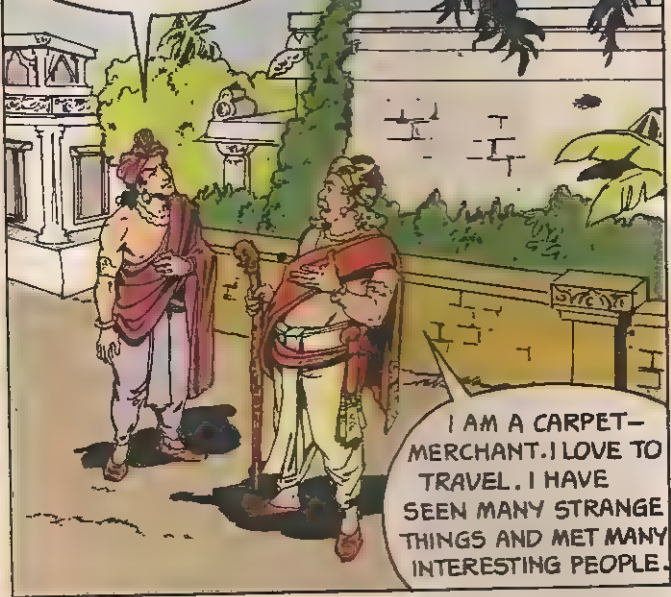
SOMETHING IS BOUND TO HAPPEN. WE'LL KEEP TRYING.

WE MUST TRY SOME OTHER MEANS AS WELL AND NOT DEPEND ONLY ON HOLY MEN.



THE NEXT DAY, ON HIS WAY TO THE RESTHOUSE THE MINISTER SAW A STRANGER.

WHO ARE YOU, SIR? I HAVE NEVER SEEN YOU IN THIS CITY BEFORE.



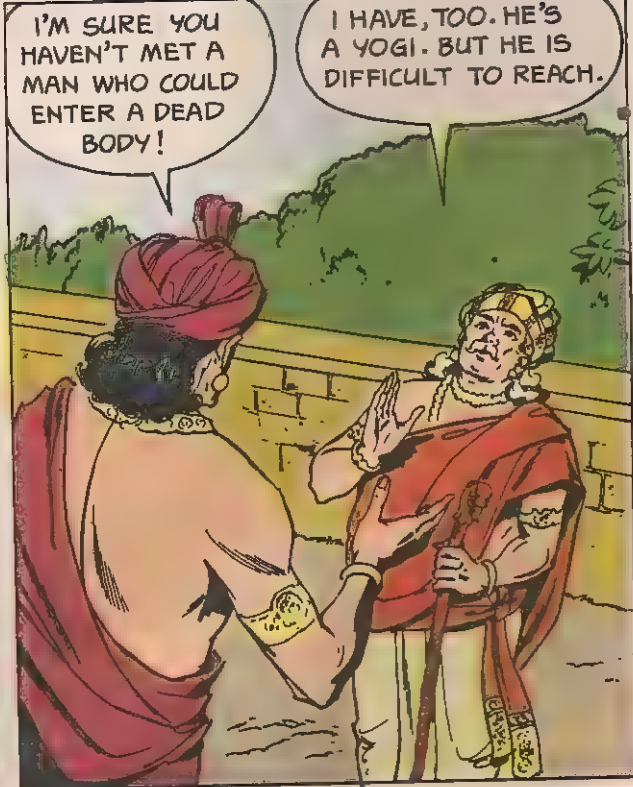
I AM A CARPET-MERCHANT. I LOVE TO TRAVEL. I HAVE SEEN MANY STRANGE THINGS AND MET MANY INTERESTING PEOPLE.

SEEN MANY STRANGE THINGS... MET MANY INTERESTING PEOPLE... SEEN MANY STRANGE THINGS....



I'M SURE YOU HAVEN'T MET A MAN WHO COULD ENTER A DEAD BODY!

I HAVE, TOO. HE'S A YOGI. BUT HE IS DIFFICULT TO REACH.





THE MINISTER COULDN'T BELIEVE HIS GOOD LUCK.

I MUST MEET THIS YOGI, NO MATTER HOW DIFFICULT IT MAY BE TO REACH HIM.

ALL RIGHT. LISTEN CAREFULLY. ABOUT NINETY-SIX MILES FROM MY CITY THERE ARE TWO PALM TREES ON EITHER SIDE OF A PATH WHICH LEADS INTO A DENSE FOREST.

ON ONE OF THEM IS PERCHED A CROW AND ON THE OTHER. A SWAN. AS YOU GO DEEP INTO THE FOREST YOU WILL SEE A MOUNTAIN.

AND THEN?

ON THE PEAK OF THAT MOUNTAIN SITS YOGI SADANANDA. HE HAS THE POWER YOU ARE LOOKING FOR. AND IF HE IS PLEASED WITH YOU, HE MAY IMPART THE SECRET TO YOU.



THE MINISTER WAS DISMAYED TO HEAR THAT.

A YOGI WILL NOT TRUST ME. I WILL HAVE TO TAKE THE KING AND THEN USE MY WITS.

SO THE MINISTER WENT TO THE KING AND TOLD HIM EVERYTHING.

WE COULD SET OUT RIGHT AWAY.

BUT IN WHICH CITY DOES THE CARPET-MERCHANT LIVE? WE CAN'T FIND THE PLACE UNLESS WE KNOW THAT.

THE MINISTER FELT FOOLISH.

IN MY EXCITEMENT I FORGOT TO ASK HIM THAT, YOUR MAJESTY. I'LL BRING HIM HERE.

WHEN THE MERCHANT WAS BROUGHT BEFORE THE KING —

YOU FORGOT TO GIVE US THE LOCATION OF YOUR CITY, MY GOOD MAN.

IT'S SIMPLE, YOUR MAJESTY. AFTER YOU LEAVE YOUR KINGDOM, YOU WILL PASS THROUGH TWELVE VILLAGES, NINE CITIES AND FIVE TOWNS. BEYOND THAT LIES MY CITY.



AS SOON AS THE MERCHANT LEFT, THE KING WENT WITH THE GOOD NEWS TO NIVRITTI.

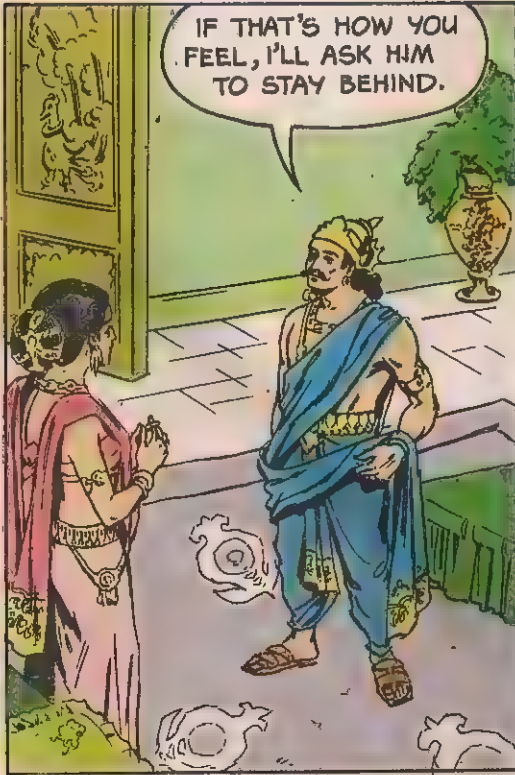
THE MINISTER AND I WILL SET OUT IMMEDIATELY TO FIND THE YOGI.



I AM DELIGHTED WITH OUR GOOD FORTUNE. BUT I DO NOT TRUST YOUR MINISTER. HE IS CRAFTY, MALICIOUS AND UNGRATEFUL. YOUR VERY LIFE WILL BE IN DANGER IF YOU TAKE HIM WITH YOU.



IF THAT'S HOW YOU FEEL, I'LL ASK HIM TO STAY BEHIND.



THE KING ACCORDINGLY SENT FOR HIS MINISTER.

I'LL GO ALONE. I WANT YOU TO LOOK AFTER THE KINGDOM WHILE I AM AWAY.

HOW CAN I LET YOU GO ALONE, YOUR MAJESTY? THE COURTIER'S CAN LOOK AFTER THE KINGDOM WHILE WE'RE AWAY.



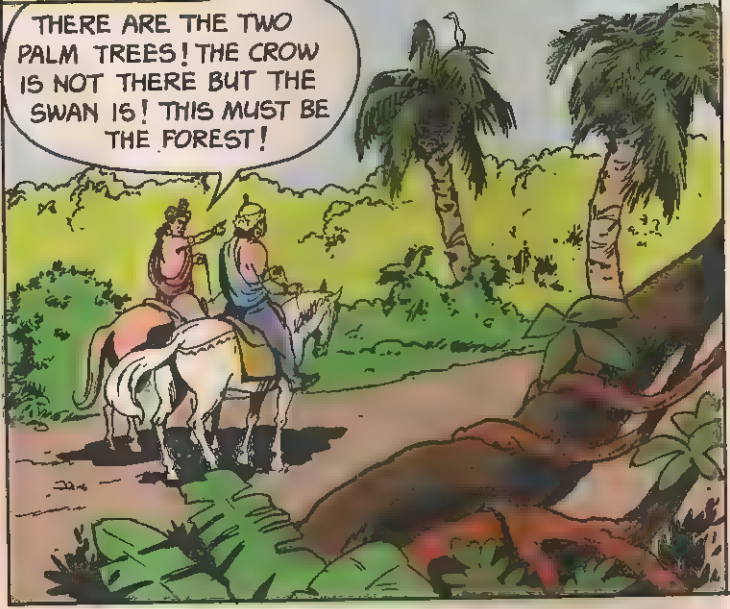


HOW CONCERNED HE  
IS ABOUT MY SAFETY!  
NIVRITTI MUST BE  
MISTAKEN ABOUT  
HIM.

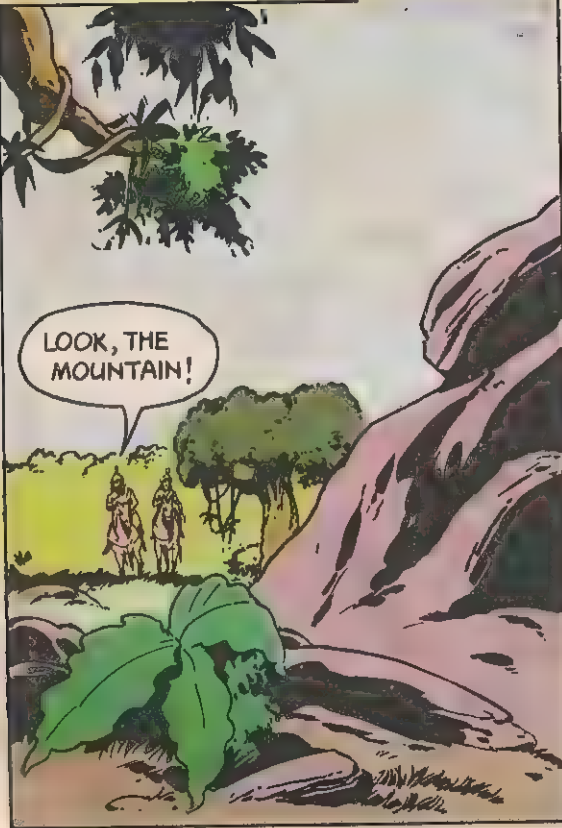


THE TWO SET OUT AND AFTER TRAVELLING A LONG  
DISTANCE —

THERE ARE THE TWO  
PALM TREES! THE CROW  
IS NOT THERE BUT THE  
SWAN IS! THIS MUST BE  
THE FOREST!



THEY MADE THEIR WAY THROUGH THE  
FOREST. SUDDENLY —



LOOK, THE  
MOUNTAIN!

THEY RODE UP THE MOUNTAIN AND SOON  
REACHED THE TOP.

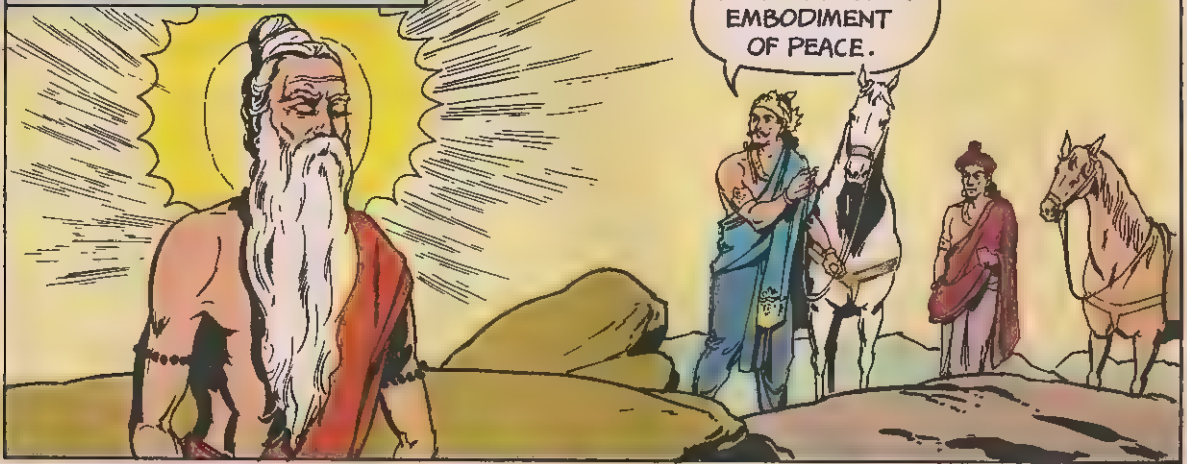
CAN YOU SEE  
THAT SHINING  
FIGURE ?

YES, IT'S  
THE YOGI!





AS THEY CAME NEAR HIM —



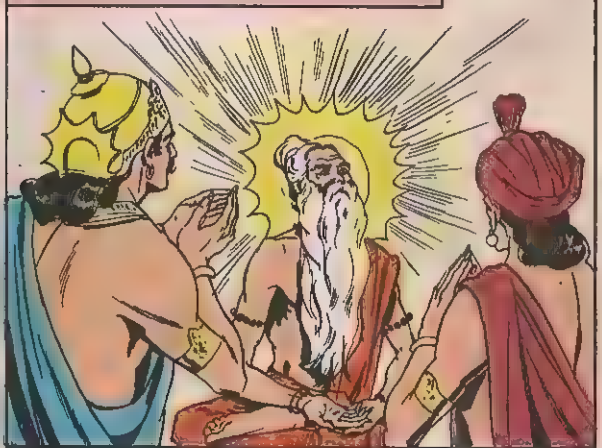
HE'S THE VERY EMBODIMENT OF PEACE.

THEY SAT BEFORE THE YOGI WHO WAS DEEP IN MEDITATION.

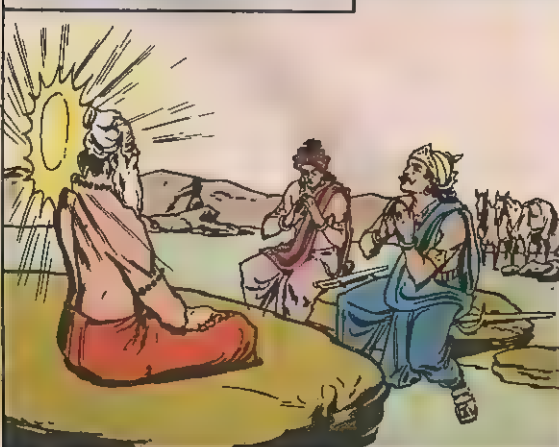


LET'S WAIT HERE TILL HE OPENS HIS EYES AND SPEAKS TO US.

AT LAST THE YOGI OPENED HIS EYES, BUT HE TOOK NO NOTICE OF THEM.



FOR DAYS THE YOGI IGNORED THEM BUT THE KING AND THE MINISTER WAITED PATIENTLY.

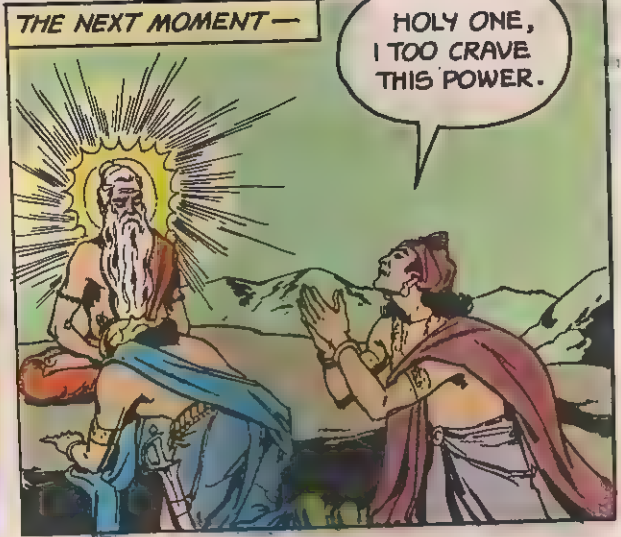
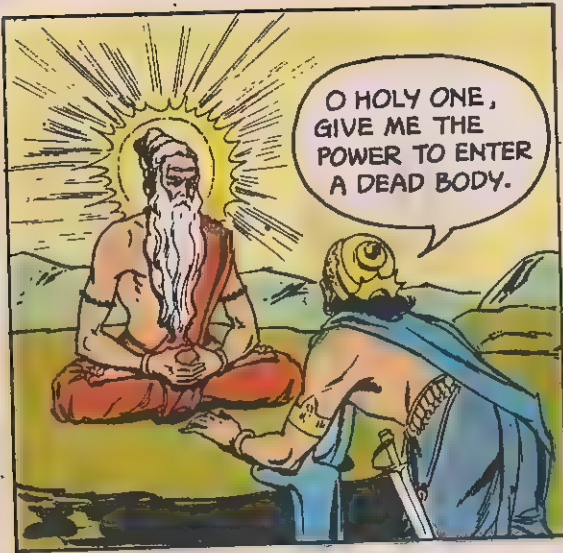


AT LAST, ONE DAY, THE YOGI SPOKE TO THE KING, IGNORING THE MINISTER.

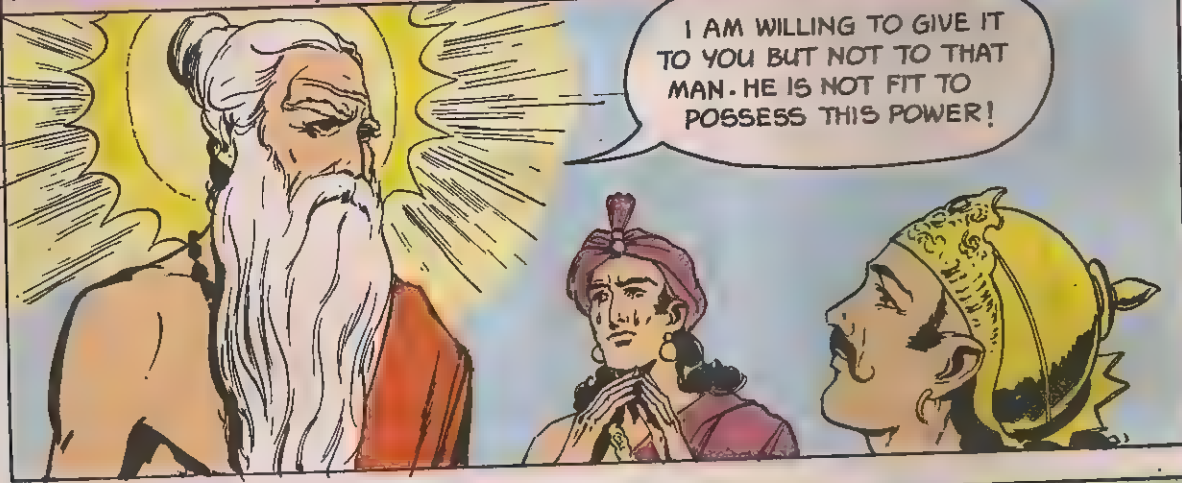


I AM PLEASED WITH YOU. ASK FOR A BOON.

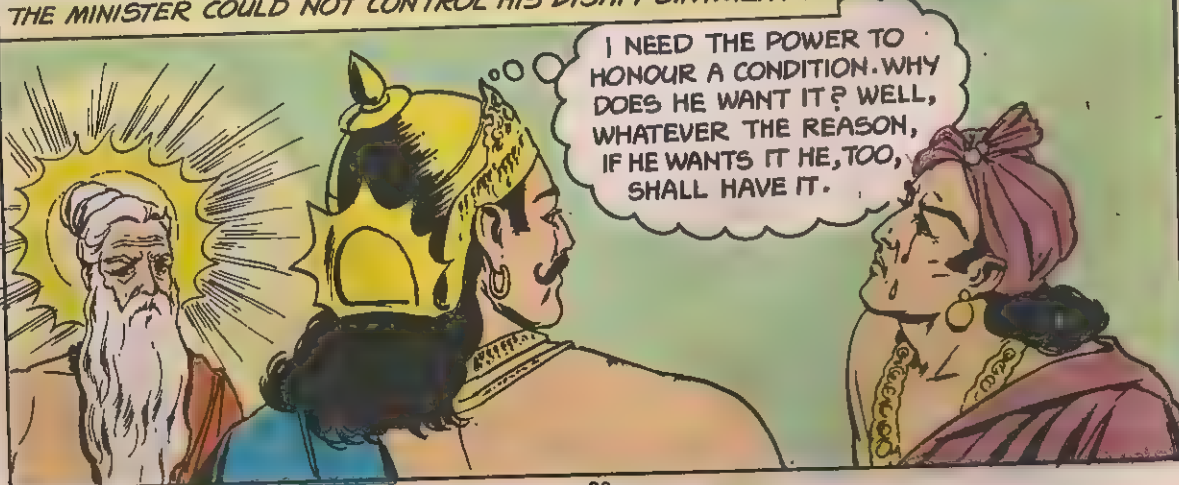




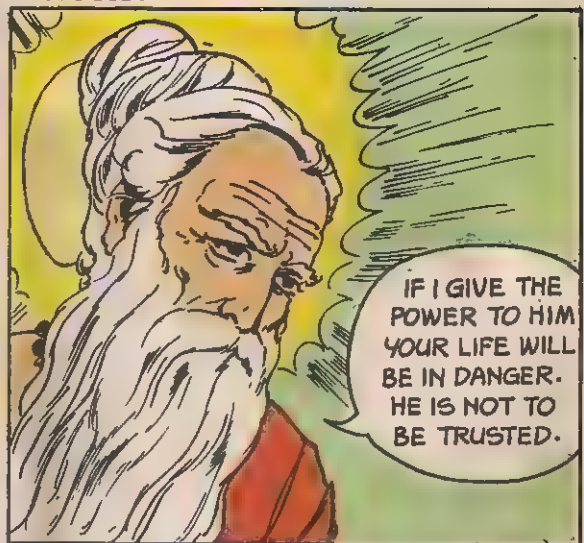
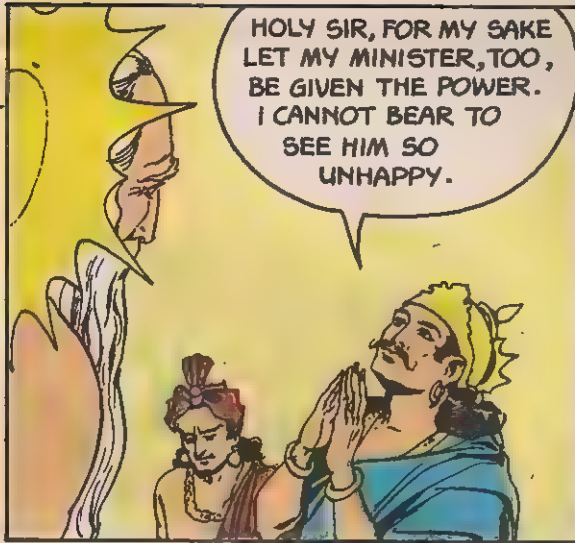
THE YOGI, HOWEVER, DID NOT EVEN LOOK AT HIM. HE ADDRESSED THE KING.



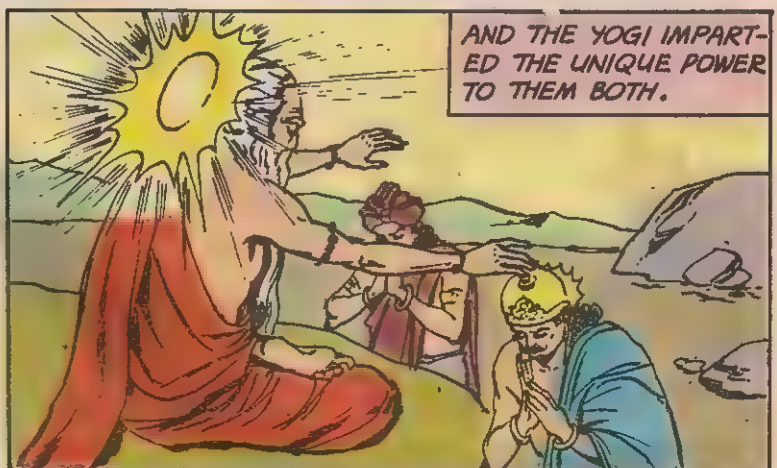
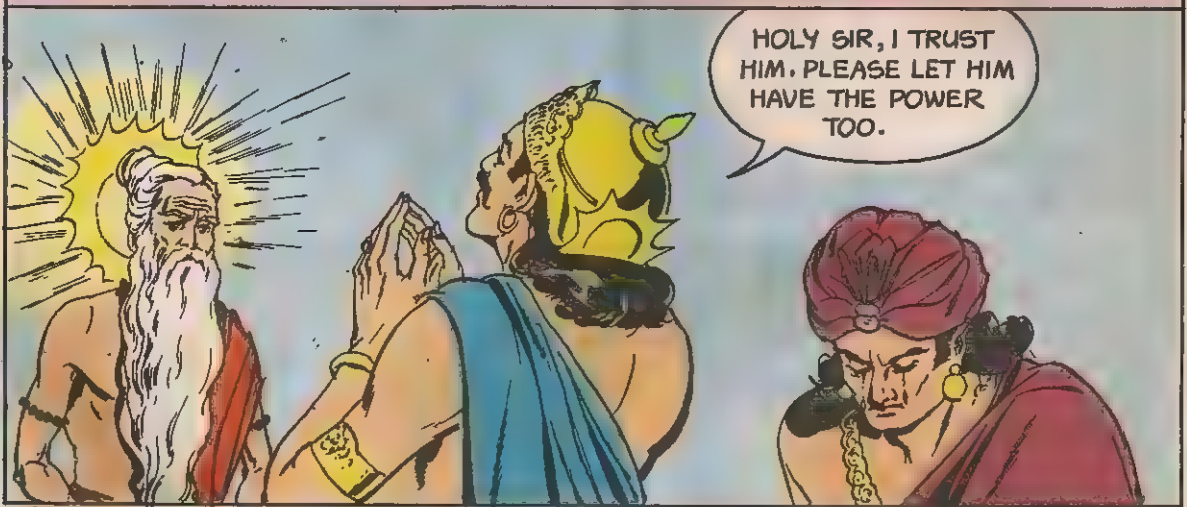
THE MINISTER COULD NOT CONTROL HIS DISAPPOINTMENT.







BUT THE KIND KING REFUSED TO BELIEVE THAT HIS MINISTER WOULD HARM HIM.



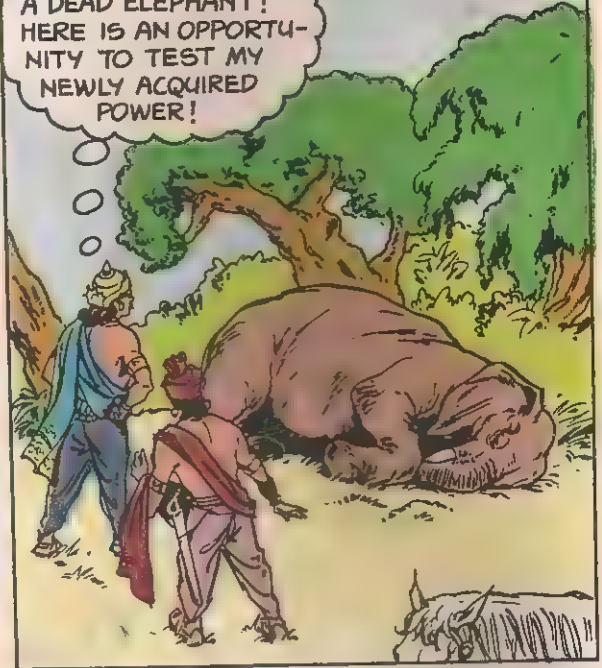


THE KING AND HIS MINISTER SET OUT ON THEIR RETURN JOURNEY. A FEW DAYS LATER, THEY CAME TO A POOL —



SUDDENLY THEY SPIED SOMETHING BEHIND A THICK SHRUB .

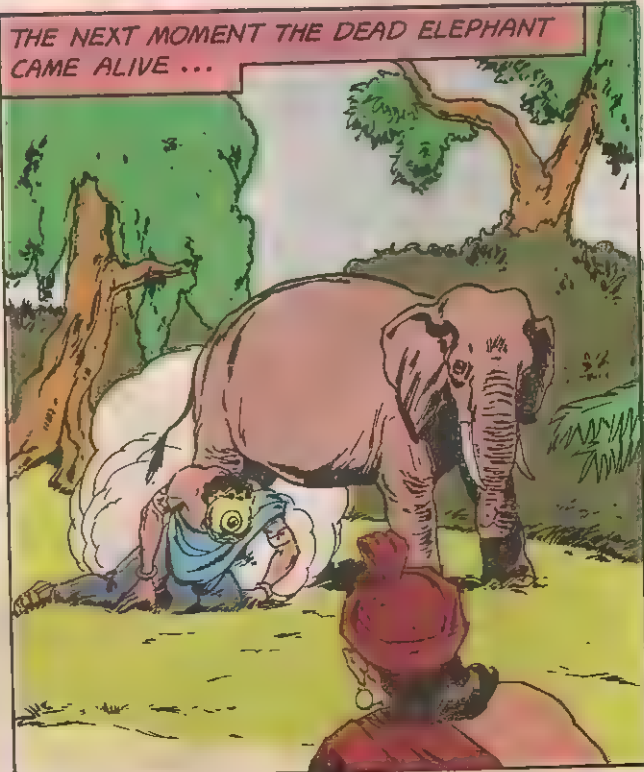
WHAT'S THIS?  
A DEAD ELEPHANT!  
HERE IS AN OPPORTU-  
NITY TO TEST MY  
NEWLY ACQUIRED  
POWER!



I'M GOING TO ENTER  
THE BODY OF THIS  
ELEPHANT. PLEASE  
TAKE CARE OF MY  
BODY TILL I COME  
BACK.



THE NEXT MOMENT THE DEAD ELEPHANT  
CAME ALIVE ...





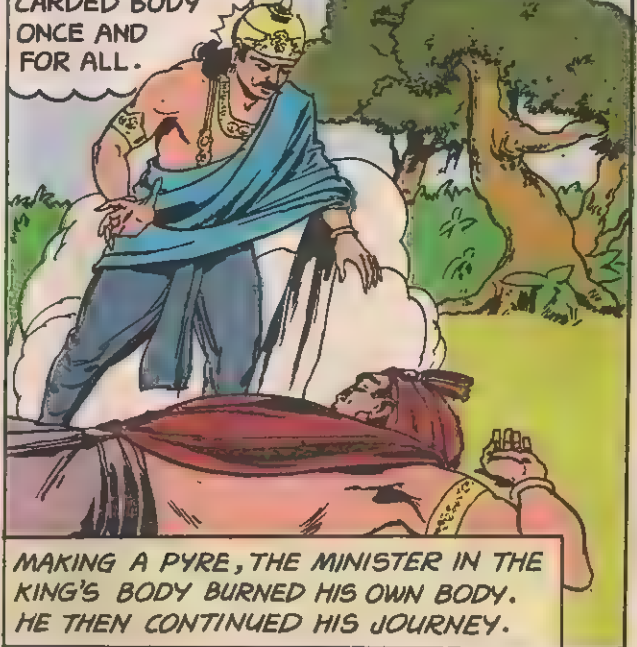
... AND WANDERED INTO THE FOREST.

THERE HE GOES!  
I MUST BE QUICK  
AND ENTER  
HIS BODY.



THE NEXT MOMENT —

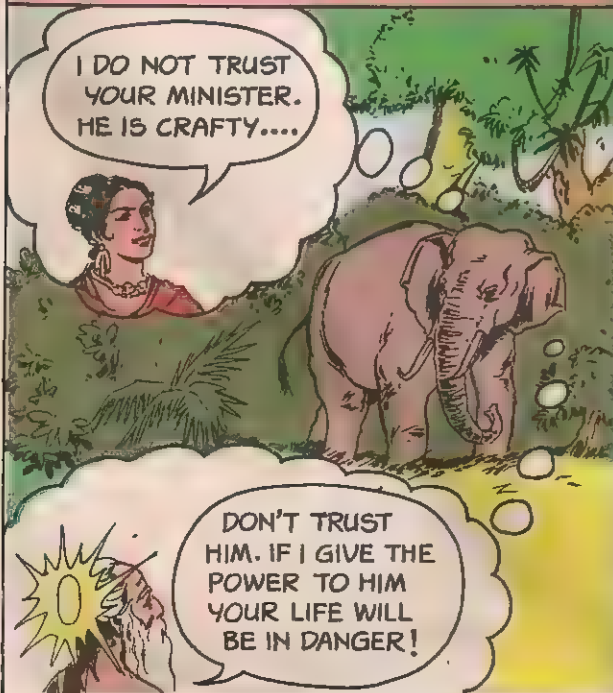
NOW I'D BETTER  
DESTROY MY DIS-  
CARDED BODY  
ONCE AND  
FOR ALL.



MAKING A PYRE, THE MINISTER IN THE  
KING'S BODY BURNED HIS OWN BODY.  
HE THEN CONTINUED HIS JOURNEY.

MEANWHILE, THE KING IN THE ELEPHANT'S  
BODY RETURNED AND FOUND BOTH HIS  
BODY AND HIS MINISTER MISSING.

I DO NOT TRUST  
YOUR MINISTER.  
HE IS CRAFTY....



DON'T TRUST  
HIM. IF I GIVE THE  
POWER TO HIM  
YOUR LIFE WILL  
BE IN DANGER!

THEY WERE RIGHT!  
HE WANTS TO ROB ME  
OF MY KINGDOM AND  
MY QUEEN. I'D BETTER  
GO HOME QUICKLY  
BEFORE HE SUCCEEDS  
IN HIS PLANS.

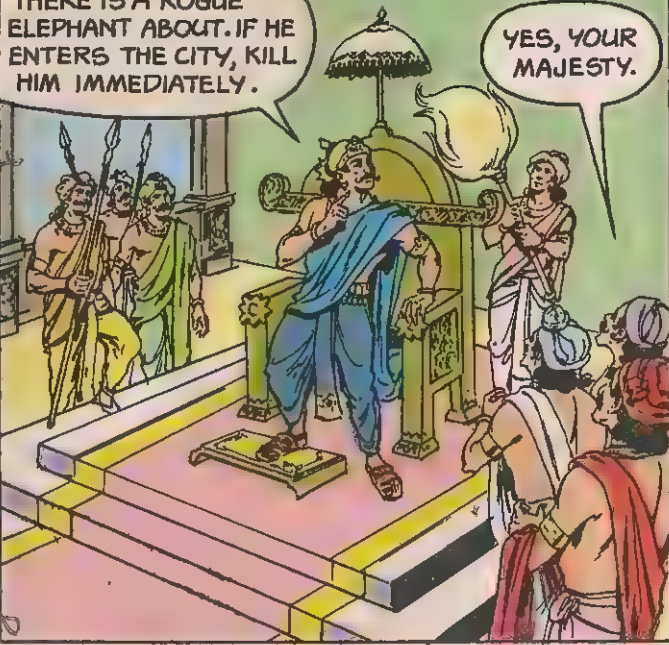




MEANWHILE, AS SOON AS THE MINISTER IN THE KING'S BODY REACHED THE PALACE HE SENT FOR THE COURTIER'S.

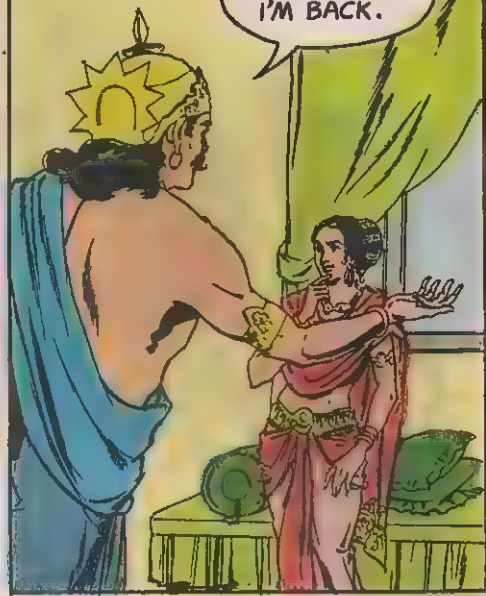
THERE IS A ROGUE ELEPHANT ABOUT. IF HE ENTERS THE CITY, KILL HIM IMMEDIATELY.

YES, YOUR MAJESTY.



THEN HE WENT TO NIVRITTI'S PALACE IN THE ROYAL PARK.

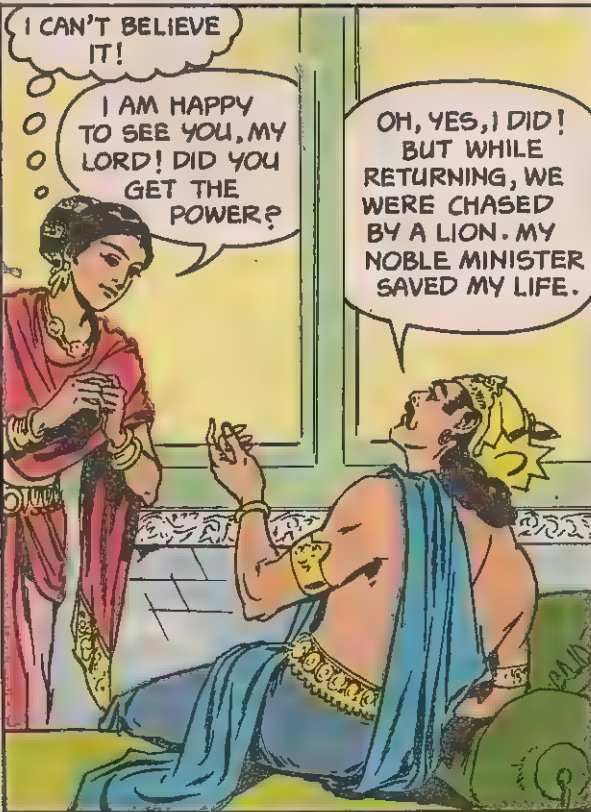
AH! NIVRITTI, I'M BACK.



I CAN'T BELIEVE IT!

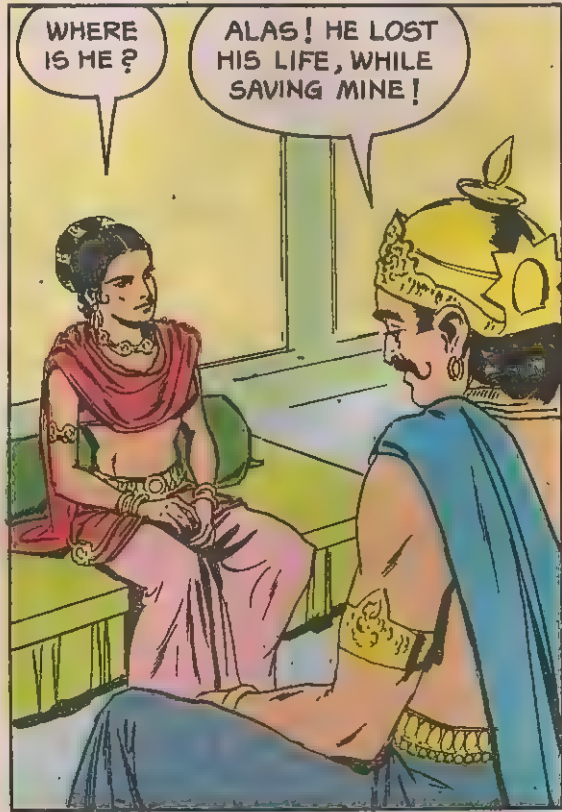
I AM HAPPY TO SEE YOU, MY LORD! DID YOU GET THE POWER?

OH, YES, I DID! BUT WHILE RETURNING, WE WERE CHASED BY A LION. MY NOBLE MINISTER SAVED MY LIFE.

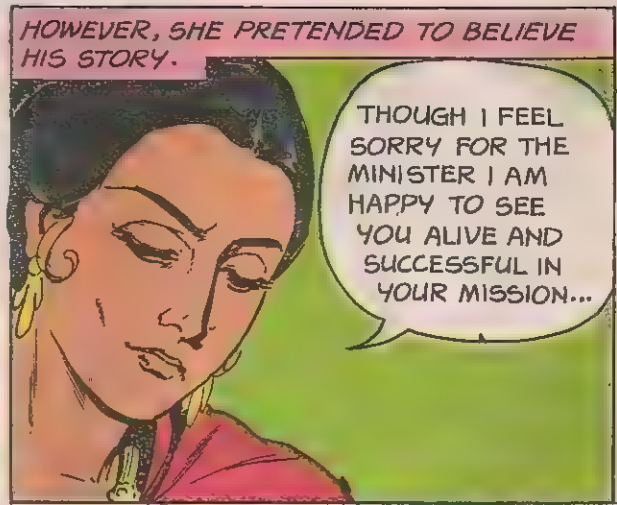


WHERE IS HE?

ALAS! HE LOST HIS LIFE, WHILE SAVING MINE!





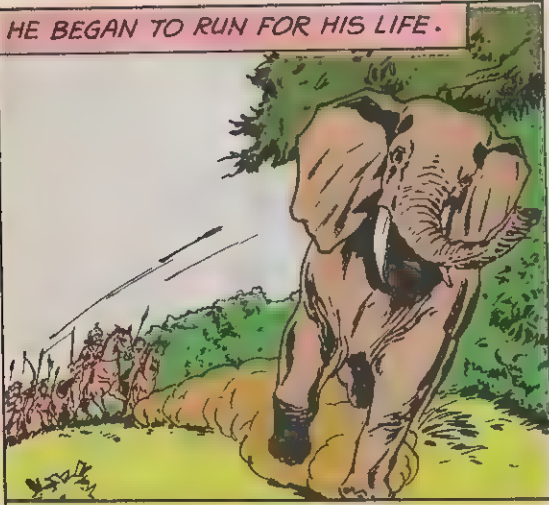




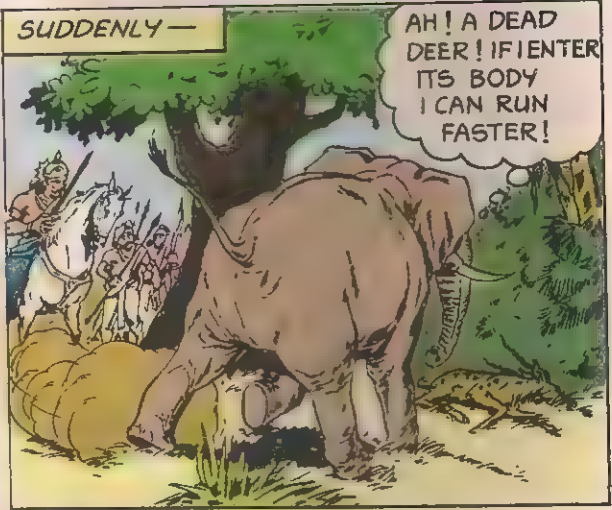
ARMING THEMSELVES THEY BEGAN TO CHASE THE KING IN THE ELEPHANT'S BODY.



HE BEGAN TO RUN FOR HIS LIFE.



SUDDENLY —



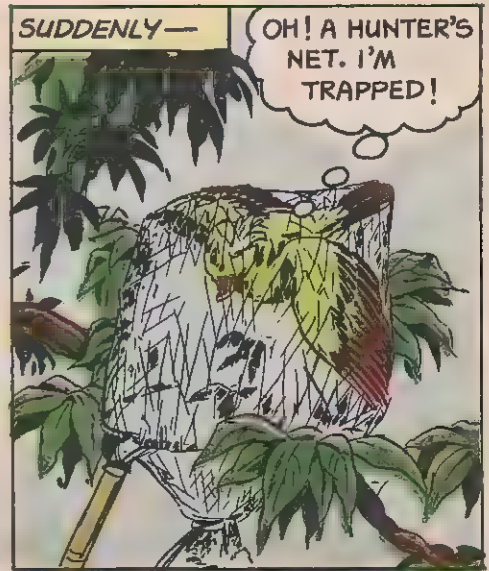
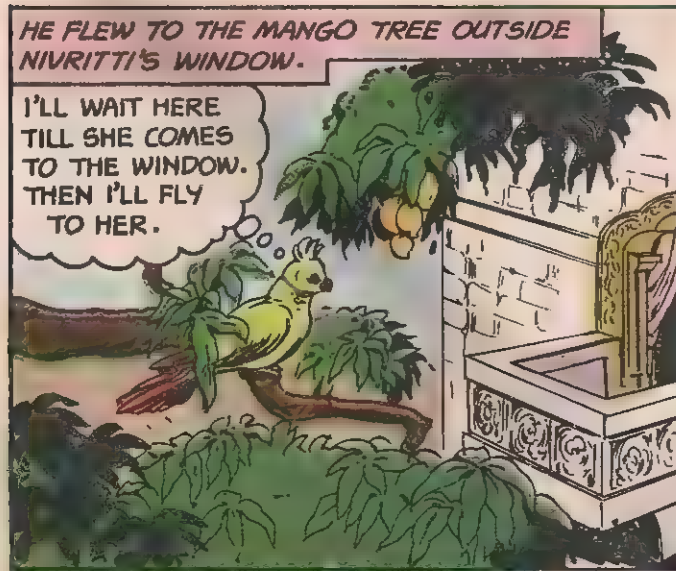
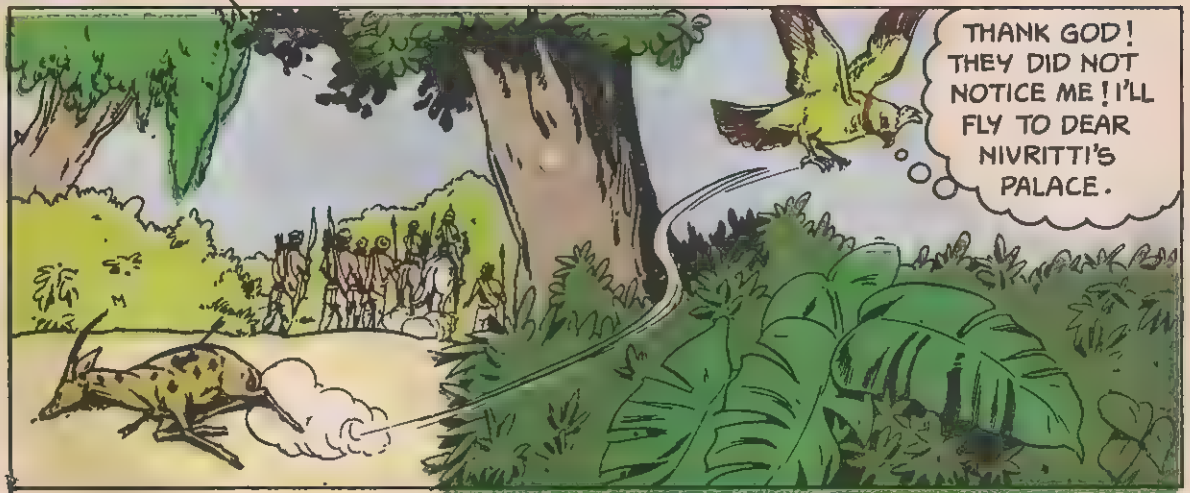
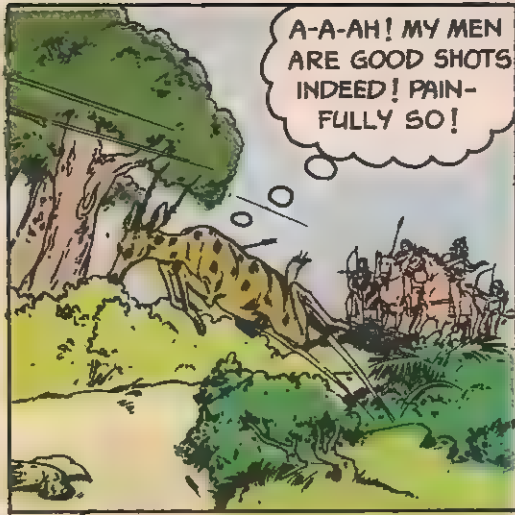
THE NEXT MOMENT THE ELEPHANT FELL DEAD AND THE DEER SPURTED AWAY.



QUICK! FOLLOW THAT DEER AND SHOOT IT DOWN!









THE KING IN THE PARROT'S BODY DID SOME QUICK THINKING.

IF YOU DO AS I TELL YOU, YOU CAN MAKE A LOT OF MONEY.

THIS BIRD TALKS! I MUST BE DREAMING!

THIS IS NO DREAM. YOU CAN SELL ME FOR A LOT OF MONEY.

YOU ARE RIGHT. I COULD GET AT LEAST A LAKH OF RUPEES.

AT THE MARKET PLACE, THE BIRD SPOTTED NIVRITTI'S MAID.

HOW IS YOUR MISTRESS? IS SHE ALL RIGHT?

YES, HE IS A TALKING BIRD. YOU CAN HAVE HIM FOR A LAKH OF RUPEES.

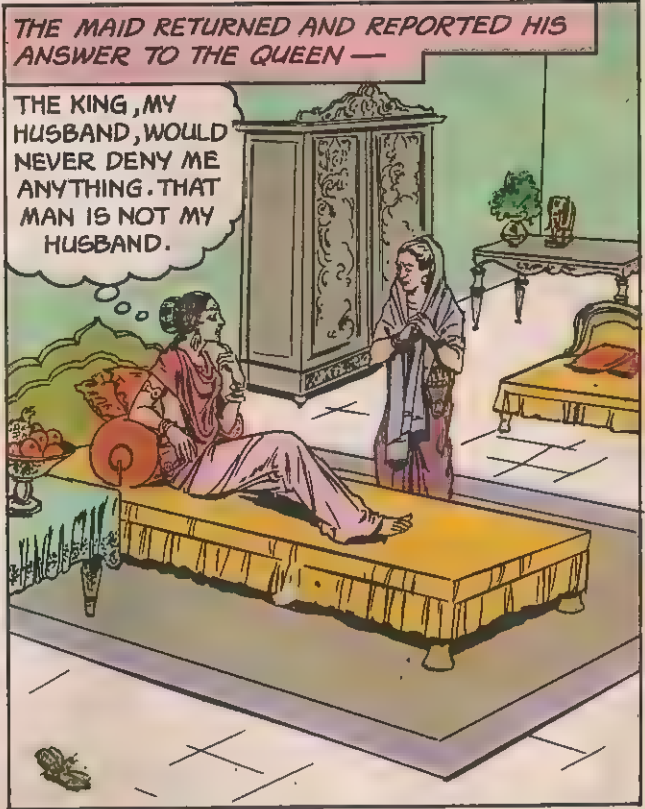
HE IS TALKING TO ME!

THE MAID RAN TO NIVRITTI AND TOLD HER ALL ABOUT THE PARROT.

...AND DON'T THINK I'M MAD! I HEARD THE PARROT WITH MY OWN EARS.

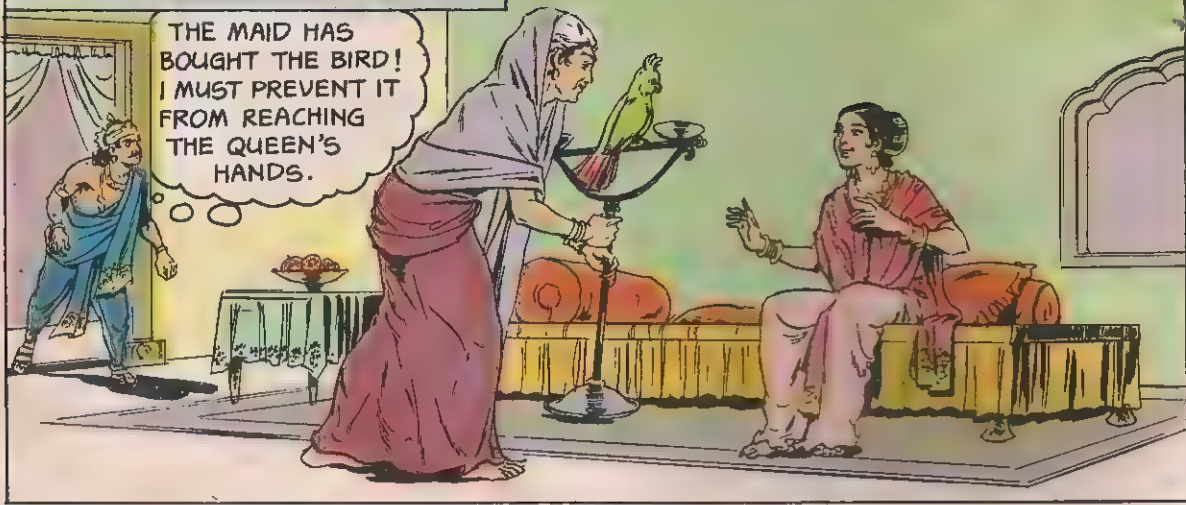
I MUST BUY THAT BIRD! GO TO THE KING AND ASK HIM FOR THE MONEY.







HE WENT TO THE QUEEN'S PALACE.



A NAMELESS FEAR GRIPPED HIS HEART. HE SEIZED THE BIRD FROM THE STARTLED MAID.

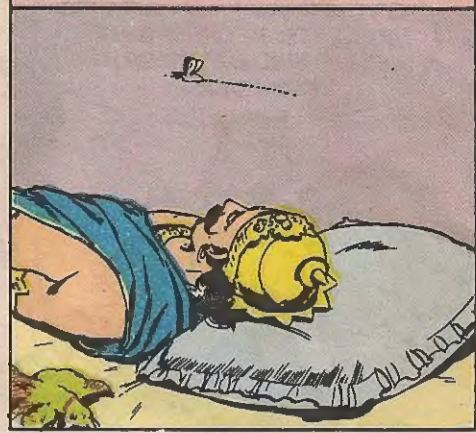




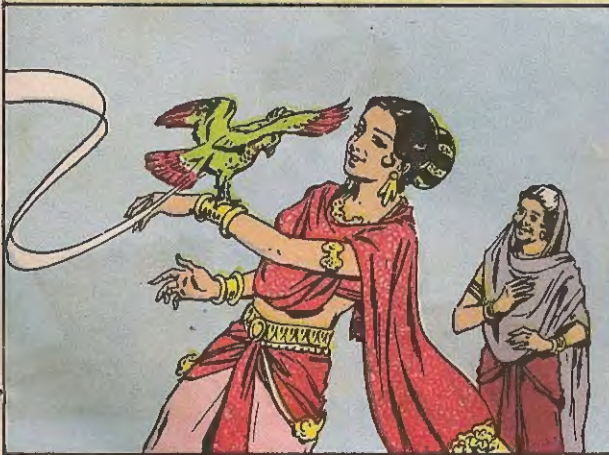
SHE WEPT SO BITTERLY THAT THE MINISTER DIDN'T KNOW WHAT TO DO. AT LAST —



HE WENT INTO THE NEXT ROOM WITH THE DEAD PARROT. THEN, LEAVING THE KING'S BODY ...



... HE ENTERED THE PARROT'S BODY AND FLEW BACK INTO THE QUEEN'S ROOM.



MEANWHILE —

I NEVER DREAMT THAT THINGS WOULD WORK OUT SO WELL.



THE KING LEFT THE BEE AND ENTERING HIS OWN BODY AT LAST ...

... HE WENT TO HIS QUEEN.





THE KING TOLD HER THE WHOLE STORY OF WHAT HAD HAPPENED DURING THE JOURNEY IN SEARCH OF THE SPECIAL POWER.

GIVE ME THAT PARROT. I'LL WRING ITS NECK AND GET RID OF THE EVIL CREATURE FOR EVER.



WHY DO YOU WANT TO BURDEN YOURSELF WITH THE SIN OF KILLING HIM? LEAVE HIM TO HIS OWN FATE. BETTER STILL, WE'LL PUT HIM IN AN IRON CAGE SO THAT HE WILL NOT BE ABLE TO DO ANY MORE MISCHIEF WITH THIS PRECIOUS POWER.



AND THE KING LOVINGLY LED NIVRITTI TO HIS OWN PALACE.





# A BED TIME STORY

GRANDMA,  
TELL ME  
A STORY.

ALL  
RIGHT.

LONG LONG AGO  
THERE LIVED  
A KING CALLED  
DASHARATHA.

HE  
HAD...

...FOUR  
SONS!

THAT'S  
RIGHT. BUT  
HOW DID YOU  
KNOW?


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